NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

Weekly Staff Newsletter
August 7, 1998

Paleontologists battle sub-zero temperatures on fossil hunting trip to Chile

John Flynn (Geology) and Darin Croft, a University of Chicago geologist, recently returned from the Altiplano and Atacama Desert regions of northern Chile.

Their quick two-week trip was sponsored by the National Geographic Society, in a fossil mammal exploration and prospecting project with Drs. Reynaldo Charrier (University of Chile), Andre Wyss (a Geology research associate from UC Santa Barbara), and Gerard Herail (ORSTOM- France). Flynn reports that while the Atacama—said to be the driest desert on earth—was beautiful, they found only one tiny bone scrap.

Work in the Altiplano was much more rewarding, yielding the first fossil mammal fauna from northern Chile (10-20 million year old rodents, armadillos, glyptodonts and ungulates found so far).

However, the high elevation (14-15,000 feet) and winter conditions—short days and nighttime temperatures of minus 20 degrees Centigrade—made thermal undergarments and "fortified campfire beverages" a necessity!

This project should contribute to an understanding of the uplift history of the Andes, paleoenvironmental changes, and what more mid-latitude tropical faunas looked like during that time. Most previous fossils of equivalent age come from high latitude Argentine Patagonia.

Submitted by the Academic Affairs office

FIELD NOTES

Week of August 10

Public Events/Special Events

Music Theater Workshop
• 12:30 to 4 p.m. each day

"We Said, We Will Not Surrender"
Film about Lisa and Hans Kittko
Montgomery Ward Lecture Hall
• 1 to 2 p.m. Wednesday

Summer Lecture Series, LH2
• 4 p.m. Wednesday

Public lecture by Alzada Kistner
"An Affair with Africa"
Montgomery Ward Lecture Hall
• 4 p.m. Thursday

Downtown Thursday Nights
• Museum open 5 to 8 p.m.

Field Associates' Dino-Mite Nite
• Friday evening (800 people)
See invitation inside

Chicago Fire vs. San Jose
• Saturday at 7 p.m.

Staff/Volunteer Events

Aerobics Class
• Tuesday in LH2, 5 p.m.
• Thursday in Classroom A, 5 p.m.

Softball Game
• Tuesday at 5:45 p.m.
Arvey Field

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

CYCLE students visit Museum labs

Sixteen students from CYCLE (Community Youth Creative Learning Experience), an educational resource for the residents of the Cabrini-Green area, visited the Museum on July 27 as part of their "Wiz Factory of Learning" program.

The students got a first-hand look at **Bill Ballard's** molecular lab in the Insects Division, as well as the Insects collection. The students also were given an introduction to the "Bug Camp" summer program, which is coordinated by Ballard and **Zeus Preckwinkle**. The behind-the-scenes tour concluded with a look at the Mammal and Bird prep lab, where **Michael Huhndorf** (Birds), **Tom Gnoske** (Birds) and **Michi Solomon** (Mammals) discussed the techniques involved in their work with skins and skeletons.

Grande published in *Natural History*

Lance Grande (Geology) discusses his work in Wyoming's Green River Formation in the July-August 1998 issue of *Natural History* magazine. Lance's contribution to the magazine's "Field Guide" column describes the fossil-rich deposits of the area, one of the richest Lagerstätten (a "mother lode" of fossilized flora and fauna) in the world, and provides some flavor of the field work experience. "Even after twenty years of fieldwork here," he writes, "I'm still thrilled to lift up a limestone slab, peer beneath it, and find a plant or animal that has not seen the light of day for millions of years."

Goodman returns to Madagascar

Steve Goodman (Mammals) left Chicago last week for ten months of research and field work. Steve will be primarily based in Madagascar, but he will also be moving back and forth to and from the African continent. He has been invited to attend a priorities setting workshop for conservation programs on Africa and Madagascar to be held in Cape Town in early August.

Returning to Antananarivo, he will have numerous responsibilities as a member of the local committee for the International Primatological Society Congress to be held there August 10-14. He is also the co-editor of the proceedings to be published by Plenum Press. Immediately after the primate meeting he will attend the International Ornithological Society Congress in Durban, South Africa. After the bird meetings, Steve, **Brian Fisher**, **John Bates**, **Shannon Hackett**, and several South African colleagues will conduct a biological inventory in Natal.

In late September Steve will be making the final arrangements for a two-month multi-disciplinary inventory of the Manongarivo forest in northwestern Madagascar, one of the few regions of the island he has not yet visited. Until early February, he will be making a number of field trips on Madagascar as well as giving a seminar at the Université d'Antananarivo.

February and March will find him in Gabon, where he will continue a project begun last year with **Brian Fisher** to inventory the "mountainous" regions of the country. (For the Gabonese these big hills are mountains.) By late March he will be back on Madagascar helping to organize a seminar for **Bill Simpson** (Geology) on paleontological lab techniques, and then heading off to a cave with Bill and students to excavate a sub-fossil site discovered a few years ago. During the

Monthly parkers to receive important new benefit

Pay less in taxes and keep the savings!

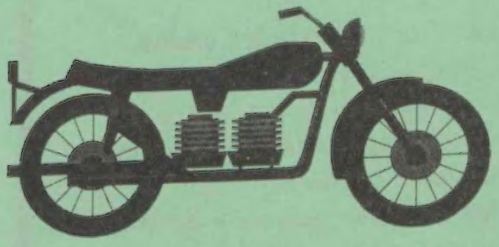
As you may know, your medical and dental insurance deductions are taken on a pre-tax basis. This means that the deductions are taken from your gross pay *before* taxes are calculated. Recently, a new law has allowed employee parking payroll deductions to be treated in the same way.

Paycheck Sample:

	Currently After-Taxed	With Parking Pass Pre-taxed
Gross Pay:	$100	$100
Parking Pass:	40	40
Taxable Pay:	100	60
Taxes (15%):	15	9
Take Home Pay:	$ 45	$ 51
Tax Savings:	$ 0	$ 6

In the above example, if you are in the 15% tax bracket, your $40 monthly parking deduction will now cost $34 a month ($40 minus the $6 tax savings). **That means $6 more for you!!!** Of course, this is just an example, and your savings will vary depending on your income, deductions and tax exemptions. You must complete a new Payroll Deduction Authorization in order to take advantage of this benefit. We will enclose forms with the August 14 paycheck and need them returned to Human Resources by **August 21, 1998**.

Submitted by **Carole Kasarda**



Softball team, undaunted, will play next week

Even though the game set for August 4 was rained out, members of the Chicago Museum Softball League remain optimistic that the skies will clear by next week.

All staff, volunteers, and interns are invited to join us at Arvey Field—just through the underpass into Grant Park—on Tuesday, August 11 at 5:45 p.m. There are spots in the lineup for fans, cheerleaders, and armchair coaches as well as players. Call **Janice Klein** at ext. 442 if you have any questions.

Everyone is invited to a

DINO-MITE NITE!

The Field Associates invite all staff, volunteers, and interns to attend the Dino-Mite Nite gala on Friday, August 14 from 7 p.m. to midnight.

Here are some of the particulars to whet your appetite:

- *Staff, volunteers, and interns may purchase tickets for themselves and one guest for only $30 apiece (regular price is $65)*
- Between 800 and 1,000 people are expected
- Honorary chairmen are John and Joan Cusack
- Music by Gentleman of Leisure
- Food for the gala has been donated by Vivo, Marche, Corner Bakery, Red Light, Big Bowl, Spago, Millennium Steakhouse, Trattoria Parma, Bistro Zinc, and Eli's, to name only a few.
- Open bar with festive drinks
- T-shirts and goodie bags
- Cocktail attire

In addition to admiring the incredible view of the city from the North Terrace, guests will be able to check out the McDonald's Fossil Prep Lab and see Sue. Proceeds from Dino-Mite Nite will benefit PIP, the Parental Involvement Program, an award-winning program designed to give parents the resources to better assist their children's educational progress and to expose children to cultural activity at an early age.

Respond early! Call **Cindy Andresen** or **Dana Cushingberry** at ext. 870. We hope to see you on Friday, August 14. If you would rather help by volunteering for the event, call **Cynthia Gulley** at ext. 453.

The Field Associates is a newly-formed group of dynamic young professionals dedicated to promoting awareness of The Field Museum's collections, research, and educational programs. They are encouraging involvement and support among young adults through a wide range of activities, such as: behind-the-scenes tours, educational events, field trips, fund raisers, and community outreach programs like PIP.

month of May he will conduct museum work in London and Paris, and visit with colleagues in Hamburg. Steve is expected back in Chicago in June 1999.

Just before Steve left, WWF-US awarded a significant grant to the program he coordinates in Antananarivo for the advancement of young Malagasy scientists. Furthermore, the Schlinger Foundation has given The Field Museum a grant to help subsidize the *Fieldiana: Zoology* volumes publishing the results of the biological inventories being conducted on Madagascar.

Sease consults on Byzantine mosaics for Republic of Cyprus

The following is an excerpt from "Church Treasures of Cyprus," *Archaeology*, July/August 1998, an article on the recovery of Byzantine masterpieces stolen in 1974. Conservators **Catherine Sease** of The Field Museum and Danaë Thimme of Indiana University, asked by the Cypriot church and government to assess their condition, concluded that the mosaics had been damaged in five discrete places, beginning with their removal from the apse. The facing – a fabric and adhesive layer applied to a mosaic or fresco to reinforce it during removal – had been ripped off without dissolving the adhesive, loosening many tesserae and pulling off the surfaces of others. The mosaics cracked as they were flown, inadequately packed, from Munich to Geneva and then to Indianapolis. Restoration work, commissioned by Goldberg in an effort to make the mosaics salable, did further damage.

Sease and Thimme's assessment, in a 1995 article, is damning:

> The restorer clearly did not understand the materials he was working on. He knew nothing about the technology involved and does not seem to have felt that an understanding of it might have proved helpful in choosing a restoration treatment. Thus, the most fundamental aspect of the appearance of the mosaics, namely that they had all been mounted on curved walls, and therefore were meant to be curved, was ignored. Much time and effort went into producing as flat and rigid a surface as possible.
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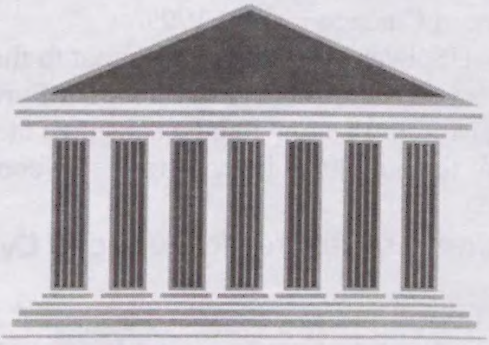
> *From "The Kankariá Mosaics: the conservators' view," in* Antiquities: Trade or Betrayed, *ed. K. W. Tubb.*

Employee Anniversaries • August

Larry Thompson (Engineering)	15 years
Jose Mendez (Housekeeping)	20 years
Eric Manabat (Exhibits)	5 years

Congratulations!



If these walls could talk...

What if these walls could talk? What would they tell us about how we respond to our visitors?

Individuals from several departments (Public Services, Museum Affairs, Education, Security, and Volunteer Services) met recently to address a complaint about staff making inappropriate comments and criticisms in public places.

Not long ago, a fifth grade teacher who has been coming to the Museum for 30 years brought his class for a visit. Several things had gone wrong. It was a rainy day, and while he went to the South Entrance, his bus was directed to the West Entrance because of a disabled student. The Northwest Coast Indians exhibit, which was a favorite of his, was closed. He found staff unhelpful, and upon entering an elevator, heard a staff member comment that "you never know which floor you will end up on."

As you can see, we had several opportunities to make this teacher's visit more enjoyable. Showing the class to a new exhibit, for example, rather than grumbling about the elevator, would have left a much more positive impression.

Remember that **all staff represent the Museum** wherever they are, and our guests are generating perceptions of you *and* the Museum based on your words and actions. Think about what you say and where you say it because you don't always know who may be listening.

Let's work together to enhance our visitors' enjoyment and present The Field Museum in the best light.

Reminder to intern supervisors

Summer is beginning to wind down and the very helpful students, teachers and volunteers for temporary/summer exhibits are completing their service time at the Museum. When you thank the volunteers and interns who contributed in your departments, please remind them that they are required to turn in their identification badges to the Museum. Badges may be turned in to the supervisor, Security Services, Human Resources or to me.

Submitted by **Patricia Stratton**, volunteer manager